

I told you I had those great-grandchildren, three of whom are in school. They have a child that sits in front of them, a child that sits to the right, a child that sits to the left, and a child that sits behind them. I want all of them well because I don't want my great-grandchild getting sick.

I don't think there was a very successful effort either by the former President or by many on your side of the aisle to say—you talk about science—do what the scientists tell you to do. Now, I notice most of your Members are doing so now, but still some wear it as a badge of courage and raise money off of it. I think that is harmful to our communities.

I think you sort of just set aside no plan. Well, no plan has resulted going from 1.7 million to 11.7 million tests per day. That is the plan. We invested in March, in the American Rescue Plan Act, in making sure that health services could respond properly. A lot of money went into health and testing in the American Rescue Plan.

You keep saying there is no plan. We have adopted plans, and we think they are positive plans. We think, hopefully, that we are going to get better soon.

Neither President Trump nor President Biden was responsible for this extraordinary virus. Our view is President Trump laid back for a long, long time before he really engaged heavily in this, and now he has changed his tune to a much more positive "listen to the scientists" kind of attitude, which we welcome.

□ 1215

I disagree with the gentleman that there is not a plan. We adopted together in 2020 five major pieces of legislation to address this challenge, and we have adopted in a partisan way, unfortunately, bills that continue to fight that fight, and I think it is fighting it, not as successfully because we have a new variant, much more transmissible, a different type. It has metastasized into a more communicable disease. That has caused us a challenge, we are addressing that, and we are accelerating the availability of resources to do so.

Mr. SCALISE. Clearly, we have some disagreements, but as we both have advocated for the vaccine, I do think one of the differences that we may have is that I strongly feel that it is a personal decision. It is a medical decision. And if government thinks that shaming people, threatening people, and firing people is going to address that challenge, they have missed the mark, and I wish they would instead move away from the shame and the firing. Hopefully the U.S. Supreme Court agrees with us and stops at least the firings of people by mandates from the government and just encourages people to have that conversation with their doctor if they have hesitation. But, ultimately, it is a decision that each individual would have to make.

We will continue this conversation I am sure, and I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. I just want to say in terms of where we are today, the overwhelming percentage—I am talking about 90 percent—of people who are getting really sick are people who are not vaccinated. And for the government to say: You need to be vaccinated because we don't want you coming to the office, we don't want you coming with other people who are being careful, who have been vaccinated, and who have done the responsible thing and getting them sick. Because what we have seen, unfortunately, even with vaccination, is that people who are vaccinated, of our own Members on both sides of the aisle who have been vaccinated, have gotten—thankfully—mild cases of COVID.

But when we talk about the President wanting people to get vaccinated—and my friend indicates that he and I both are advocates of that, and/or requiring them to get vaccinated—the reason you require people to get vaccinated, the more people you have unvaccinated, the more hosts this virus has to metastasize and to grow into a different type of virus that can attack in different ways. That is why you do that. That is why they talk 70 percent. Now we just have about 70 percent in America now. Very frankly, if we had a higher percentage we would be better off. So let's hope that we can work together to make sure that we give encouragement to people to do what the scientists advise.

My friend talks about the reason we were so successful in that year under Warp Speed of getting those three vaccines is because the scientists knew what had to be done. They found out and they had quick discoveries and eliminated a lot of dead-ends relatively quickly because of our computer capability and transformation of information around the world and dead-ends.

If we listen to them, we would be better off. But an awful lot of people are saying: Don't listen to them. Don't do it.

When the gentleman says for health reasons, there are hundreds, probably billions, I don't know what the billions are, people who have been vaccinated with a miniscule and almost undetectable adverse reaction. So I don't know what the gentleman talks about for health reasons. I know Djokovic is saying he is doing it for health reasons. I don't know what those are. Maybe my friend does. I am not an expert enough to know what that is. But all the doctors I talk to—and certainly our own doctor here whom we consult with on a regular basis, I know both of us have done that—say get the vaccine.

So I would hope that all of us would ask our constituents to get the vaccine. It is good for you, it saves your lives, it saves your families, and it saves others. Get it.

Mr. SCALISE. To be clear, I never said it was for health reasons. I said it was a health decision. So this is a medical decision that people are making.

Again, in the past we have seen this suggested by some in the medical community inaccurately that if you get vaccinated you can't get the virus. A Supreme Court Justice said that if you get vaccinated you can't spread the virus. That turned out to be false. We know whether vaccinated or not you can get the virus. You can receive the virus, you can give it to other people, and you can die. We know in the hospitals the higher propensity of people in the hospitals are unvaccinated.

Those are the kinds of things that we should be encouraging to get the facts out and then encouraging people to go make their decision with their doctor if they have concerns and questions.

There are valid questions. There are people in the past who have raised religious exemptions to other vaccines and, by the way, been given approval for those religious exemptions that today are not getting similar religious exemptions for this.

So let's just treat it equally, let's treat it fairly, and let's just focus on the facts. This idea that if you mandate something and threaten somebody it is going to change behavior, it is just not proving itself to be correct, and it is causing more division and forcing people into corners that they shouldn't be on. So hopefully, again, we can continue this conversation and get back to a place where we are in agreement which we have been in things like Operation Warp Speed.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

HAPPY FOUNDERS DAY TO DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INCORPORATED

(Mrs. BEATTY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BEATTY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate 109 years of sisterhood, scholarship, and service in Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.

Founders Day embodies the living legacy of our predecessors. Today six members of the Congressional Black Caucus—Congresswoman YVETTE CLARKE, Congresswoman BRENDA LAWRENCE, Congresswoman VAL DEMINGS, Congresswoman LUCY MCBATH, Congresswoman STACEY PLASKETT, and I—stand proudly in our Founders' footsteps.

Happy Founders Day to the Columbus Alumnae Chapter, Delta Kappa Chapter, and to all my sisters in Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Byrd, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 2201. An act to manage supply chain risk through counterintelligence training, and for other purposes.

S. 2520. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide for engagements with State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, and for other purposes.

PRESIDENT BIDEN'S COVID CRISIS

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address President Biden's COVID crisis.

Sadly, COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in the United States have reached record highs in the past week. Many Americans are having trouble finding COVID at-home tests and difficulties in scheduling a time to be tested with their healthcare provider.

What is President Biden's response?

In a recent COVID Zoom meeting with Governors, President Biden said: "There is no Federal solution."

Now, this mishandling of the pandemic is disappointing. Operation Warp Speed, developed under the previous administration, provided significant vaccines in record time. This initiative also established a robust distribution plan, innovative treatments, medical equipment, and ever-growing testing capacity.

Madam Speaker, in addition to this, our families are struggling to pay for everyday goods as inflation reaches a 40-year high. We are facing a self-inflicted economic crisis as this administration encourages our workforce to stay home. Our students continue to face uncertainty in their learning with last-minute school closures despite schools receiving ample COVID relief funding.

To distract from these failures, President Biden and congressional Democrats are trying to change the rules in the Senate to pass their Socialist agenda.

VOTER SUPPRESSION

(Mr. GALLEGRO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GALLEGRO. Madam Speaker, on January 6 we witnessed a violent coup attempt in our Capitol fueled by the big lie.

Our country continues to face a slow-moving coup in the form of voter suppression.

I have seen firsthand in my home State of Arizona voter suppression laws targeting people of color and a State senate that would rather waste taxpayer money on a sham audit instead of upholding our sacred democratic right to vote.

The Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act is critical to protecting the vote in my State and States across the country where restrictive laws are being put into place to strip people of their right to vote. Arizona will stand strong together this weekend. Thousands will gather this Saturday in Phoenix for democracy and voting rights.

Passing this bill today answers their call by guaranteeing access to democracy for every Arizonan.

Today the House showed where it stands. We won't shrink from protecting our democracy and the voting rights of all Americans. It is past time for the U.S. Senate and Senator SINEMA to do the same.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF GRANVILLE CRANE

(Mr. PALAZZO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALAZZO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of the late Granville Crane, surviving crew member of the USS *Indianapolis* and recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal.

Mr. Crane was born in 1925 and turned 95 years old this year. He joined the ship's crew at the age of 16, one of the youngest crew members to join at the height of World War II.

In 1945 he participated in a top-secret trip to deliver parts for the first nuclear weapon ever used in combat and was aboard the same ship when it was torpedoed and sunk that year.

Hundreds of men went down with their ship, and many more faced dehydration, shark attacks, and exposure before there was any hope of rescue. Of 1,195 men aboard, Mr. Crane was one of only 316 who survived. As Mr. Crane waited to be rescued, he clung to his faith.

Mr. Crane will be remembered as a family man, a hero, a survivor, a patriot, and a great man of God.

On behalf of the Fourth Congressional District and our great Nation, we are forever in Mr. Crane's debt. Our prayers are with Mr. Crane's family at this time. May he rest in peace.

MINIMUM WAGE

(Mr. CARTER of Louisiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, 20 States, including Louisiana, still have the same hourly pay floor as the Federal minimum wage: \$7.25.

Louisiana also has the second highest poverty rate of any State. That is because minimum wage is a poverty wage—a full-time salary is less than \$16,000 a year. No one can survive on that, much less raise a family on that wage.

While the Federal minimum wage has not increased since 2009, the costs of housing, medicine, food, and childcare have all exponentially increased. We cannot simply subject millions of our constituents to endure the trials of poverty. It is not a mystery. We can, we must, and we know how to help. It is time to finally increase the Federal minimum wage and lower the costs with the Build Back Better Act.

INFLATION SURGE

(Mr. HILL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the latest Consumer Price Index data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics just yesterday.

This new data shows a 7 percent annual increase in inflation—the largest 12-month increase since 1982. The last time inflation was this out of control, Michael Jackson had just released "Thriller". So from moonwalking to now sleepwalking with President Biden, we have continuously seen negative real wages, meaning that our pay is actually decreasing when you account for inflation.

The President's only idea is to print and spend more money. Gasoline is up 50 percent. Propane, kerosene, and firewood are up 34 percent; and beef, veal, and bacon are up 18 percent. Higher inflation is eroding the true purchasing power for all American families, and these record-breaking CPI numbers underestimate the real cost of inflation.

Americans need leadership that will prioritize getting our economy and our Nation back to its pre-pandemic performance.

□ 1230

AMERICA'S CHILDREN ARE COUNTING ON US

(Ms. SCANLON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SCANLON. Madam Speaker, January 14 marks the first time in 6 months that families will not receive an expanded child tax credit payment, a program to support children and families that Congress passed last spring with the American Rescue Plan.

For the last 6 months, working and low-income families have had the relief of knowing that every month they would receive \$250 per child, and \$300 for kids under six.

These payments have been a lifeline for families, helping them put food on the table and provide for children as the pandemic rages. As a result, child poverty and hunger then dropped in this country by almost half.

More than 76,000 families in my district received these monthly payments, and they are worried about what will happen now that the payments have ended. Just last weekend, two constituents, a dad and a grandmother, approached me to say how important the CTC program had been.

We cannot go backwards. The Senate must move quickly to pass the Build Back Better Act and extend the child tax credit. America's children are counting on us.